

THE OPPOSITION TO DIRECT LEGISLATION

DECLARED TO BE SHORT SIGHTED

The Reactionary Ideas of the Bourgeois-Socialists of England Will Never Be Triumphant in the International Socialist Movement.

"Let us go back to the fleshpots of Egypt." This was the cry of the Jews when they met with the first trials of liberty. And this is the cry of the short-sighted opponents of direct legislation now. They see that the people in their ignorance often decide wrongly the issues brought before them, and their heart at once fails them, their confidence in the people is at once destroyed. They forget all the crimes and errors committed by kings, aristocracies and representative assemblies, although every page of history fairly reeks with their crimes and deceit, and on the most insufficient evidence they reject government by the people, and approve necessarily the alternative systems, which experience proves to be so utterly corrupt. The arguments used by the opponents of direct legislation do indeed logically lead to monarchy and aristocracy. Representative democracy, not less than pure democracy, must be condemned, if the errors committed by the people are to serve as a reason for depriving them of their rights.

"The people's referendum has elected McKinley," cries Mr. Frederic Heath. "The people's referendum has supported Napoleon." If this argument proves anything, it is that the people are not fit to elect their rulers, and would seem to argue in favor of the Russian system of government, where benevolent laws prevent the "popular referendum" from committing errors.

Is it really necessary at the threshold of the twentieth century to prove that the only way to learn to walk is by trying it again and again in spite of endless falls? Political wisdom can only come by experience, just as any other sort of wisdom. The people will always remain in their childhood, if others will think and act for them. Representative democracy has so utterly sunk in corruption, both here in America and in Europe, that it is imperatively necessary to have a radical change. Such a change can only be either to the right, towards direct democracy, or the left, some form of monarchy or aristocracy; to the future or the past.

The Fabian Society, indeed, warns the world against further steps in the direction of democracy. Not only do they reject the referendum and initiative, but even the election of governors and judges is abhorrent in their eyes. In short, the present system of English government seems very perfect in their eyes; nay, the only conceivable quintessence of democracy. When we remember, however, that these ideas of theirs, which they have with much parade brought forward before the last International Congress, have been practically unanimously rejected; and that the Congress has, on the contrary, decided in favor of both national and municipal direct legislation, and the election of all officers by the people; when we remember all this we need have no fear for the future of democracy; no fear that the reactionary ideas of the bourgeois Socialists of England will ever be triumphant in the Universal Socialist movement. There remains to account for the well known support which Professor Dicey and a few other Conservatives, both in England and elsewhere, give to the referendum movement. This certainly is the same thing as the support by Napoleon III. and Bismarck of universal suffrage. Certainly they hoped to exploit the ignorance of the people. But is Mr. Heath for this reason prepared to condemn universal suffrage? Logically he is bound to do so.

I quite agree with Comrade Debbs, that apart from socialism the initiative and referendum cannot satisfy us, and that socialism ought to be our supreme aim, but I cannot see the wisdom of attacking the proposals, repeatedly asserted by all the Socialist Congresses, proposals dear to the heart of every believer in popular government, and attacking them by arguments which logically can only lead to monarchy or aristocracy.

New York. S. Recher.

I am sorry to see that the referendum is in disfavor with our comrades, because just now the enemies of Socialism appear to find it a drawing card. But that the politicians are juggling with it does not prove that Socialists might not make an honest use of it to good advantage; and because a thing is not a universal panacea, it is not necessarily an evil. The referendum occupies an excellent place in our platform, the eleventh plank. Of course it ought not to stand first nor second, but to throw it

out altogether would surely be a mistake.

Let us consider some of Comrade Heath's arguments. First, he recites the bad use which Napoleon III made of the plebiscit or referendum in order to gain his own despotic ends. But does not Comrade Heath know a country, on this side of the Atlantic, where representative government is worked by the capitalist class just as successfully as the plebiscit was worked by Napoleon III? And we have only two alternatives, legislation by the people, or legislation by their representatives; for Caesarism of any sort is not to be thought of by Social Democrats. If the referendum would not help the disinherited classes, what can we say of representative government! In what country has it ever represented the working people?

It is possible that the referendum would "act as a brake." Very likely, if the American people were to vote on the Socialistic system today, they would vote it down by a tremendous majority. But if this is the case, could any body of legislative or executive experts establish the Co-operative Commonwealth and make it a success? Its very name answers the question in the negative. Without the co-operation and sympathy of the whole mass of the people, the thing would fall short. The inauguration of Socialism is a very different thing from any mere political changes, which may often be effected by political experts without much popular support. But the change to Socialism would touch every man so closely in every detail of his life that only the hearty good will and intelligent co-operation of the whole people could make it permanently possible. They only can change it from a theory into a living thing. We are not Fabians, we are Social Democrats. Perhaps the faith of the Fabians in government by experts is one cause of their estrangement from the people. Perhaps it is one cause of their smug complacency and almost childish satisfaction in the very meager results they have as yet attained. That we as a party should ever come to an end like this, may all the fates forefend!

It seems a tempting short cut to the Co-operative Commonwealth to intrust its inauguration entirely to the hands of legislative and executive experts. But perhaps this is one of the cases where the longest way round is the shortest way home. E. H. T.

Comrade Heath scores a strong point against the referendum in his article in the issue of June 24. He shows the absurdity of adopting or rejecting propositions without full education on the subject, and in so doing helps me in my opposition to the "Demands for Farmers," though he takes the other side of the question. If he will refer to my article in the issue of April 8, he will find that I said:

"I believe I am safe in saying that had the circumstances surrounding the birth of the S. D. P. been such as to have permitted a discussion of this program, it would not now be under consideration."

When he recalls the events surrounding the adoption of the platform, he must remember there was a lack of thorough discussion, which he now regards as indispensable to a right solution. This latter thought I heartily concur in, and I'm sorry to see Comrade Gordon disappear behind Edward Bellamy.

To my mind it seems logical to get those in line, who by the workings of the historic development, on which we base our position, are the first to experience the necessity of the change we work for. The others will come in due order, as the movement the world over demonstrates. Chas. R. Martin. Tiffin, Ohio.

Alone in Politics

The Social Democratic party has determined to go its own gait. It declines to fuse with any other organization in political brotherhood. It has been decided that no candidates nominated by the local branch shall be allowed to receive an endorsement of their candidacy from any other political organization. There is of course no way to prevent a man from being popular, and if some party outside of the Social Democracy wishes to boom a candidate of the Social Democrats there is nothing to prevent them from doing it. The candidate, however, will, we suppose, have to decline to formally accept and acknowledge the favor of the party outside of his own in deciding that he is good enough for them.

The Social Democrats are surely independent people, and are bound to run along paths blazed out by themselves. Others may follow, but may not lead, and may not even go down the misty vista of politics hand in hand with the social brethren.—Brockton (Mass.) Enterprise.

Mayor Chase, of Haverhill, is making good use of the bicycle to reach meetings in his district.

WHAT A SOCIALIST GOVERNOR COULD DO

TOLD BY A SOCIALIST CANDIDATE

Single-Handed He Could Pave the Way in Massachusetts or Any other State for Socialist Supremacy at the Ballot Box.

This article, necessarily brief through limitation of space, is based on the manual of the Massachusetts general court, though its general conclusions may apply to other states.

A governor is the recognized chief executive of a state, and with the advice of the council (numbering eight in Massachusetts, besides the lieutenant-governor), which he has full power to call together, orders and directs the affairs of the commonwealth according to the laws of the land.

The governor, and in his absence the lieutenant-governor, is president of the council, but without vote; and the lieutenant governor is a member of the council except when in the chair.

The governor, with the advice of council, may adjourn or prorogue (extend) the session of the general court to any time desired by the two houses, or call it together earlier than usual, if the welfare of the commonwealth require. In case of disagreement between the two houses regarding the time of adjournment or extension, the governor, with the advice of council, has a right to adjourn or prorogue for ninety days, as the public good may require.

The governor is commander-in-chief of the army and navy, and of all military forces of the state by sea and land, and has full power, from time to time, to train, instruct, exercise and govern the militia and navy; and, for special defense and safety, to assemble the inhabitants of the state in martial array, and to lead them against an invading foe, pursuing and destroying by force of arms, or in any fitting way, all or every person and persons attempting the destruction, invasion, detriment or annoyance of the commonwealth.

The power of pardoning offenses, and the appointing of all judicial officers, solicitor general, notaries public, and coroners, resides in the governor, with advice of the council.

Major-generals are commissioned by the governor, who also appoints the adjutant general, together with all officers of forts and garrisons and all continental officers in the province of the commonwealth to appoint.

Moneys are issued from the state treasury by warrant under the governor's hand, while various heads of departments must submit to him reports relative to the affairs of the state.

No bill or resolve of the state or house can become a law until it has been laid before the governor for his revision. If the governor refuses to sign, the bill or resolve must be reconsidered and approved by a two-thirds yeas and may vote of both branches of the legislature before it can become a law over the governor's veto. Thus a Socialist governor can often successfully defeat legislation hostile to the true interests of humanity, or in any event could, by veto, emphasize the policy of the Socialists, while at the same time the yeas and nay vote thus required would reveal the identity of those opposed to the principles of collective ownership and operation, resulting in the return of a larger number of Socialists to the general court in the following year.

Since the candidates of the higher official positions usually receive the smallest number of votes in new parties, the election of a Socialist governor would naturally imply the simultaneous election of a Socialist majority in house and senate, as the Socialist sentiment necessary to place a Socialist governor in the chair would, under normal conditions, suffice to guarantee a Socialist supremacy in both branches of the legislature.

Lacking the support of both house and senate, however, and even in the face of an openly hostile council, a Socialist governor could do much to promote the principles of collective ownership and operation. His official position would add weight to his words, he would be much in demand as a speaker, while his public utterances would be not only heard by large assemblies, but would be transmitted by the press to many and distant quarters.

Thus it will be seen that by voice, in public and private, by the pen, by pardoning and appointive power, by veto, in the discussions of the council, and even by the sword (though this latter is hardly in accord with the peaceable principles of Socialism), a Socialist governor could wield great powers and exert a strong influence in the direction of the establishment of the co-operative commonwealth, which must underly true progress in future and contribute to

the higher and nobler interests of humanity.

The preamble of the Massachusetts constitution states that "The end of the institution, maintenance, and administration of government, is to secure the existence of the body politic, to protect it, and to furnish the individuals who compose it with the power of enjoying in safety and tranquillity their natural rights and the blessings of life; and whenever these great objects are not obtained the people have a right to alter the government, and to take measures necessary for their safety, prosperity and happiness."

In the presence of great and growing trusts and corporations, founded upon gigantic aggregations of capital, which on the one hand are elevating the price of commodities and on the other denying that employment to increasing thousands which is necessary to securing the means for purchasing these commodities, it should be patent to the most casual observer that "the power of enjoying in safety and tranquillity their natural rights, and the blessings of life," is not, at present, secured to the individuals who compose society. It was not intended, it is not right, that a few have wrested from the many, by legislative jugglery, the control and assumed ownership of the vast stores of earth's mineral wealth, and are fast doing the same by every necessity and commodity. Justice, no less than mercy, demands such alteration, such reconstruction, of government as shall in reality guarantee and furnish, to every individual, those rights set forth in the declaration of its constitution.

In the organizing of great corporations in private hands, society is invaded by a foe more deadly than an armed host, because more insidious in its methods and clothed with the authority of existing law. The value of organization and co-operation is recognized by every thinking, intelligent man, and it is true that "trusts" and great corporations are the results of genuine growth along scientific lines of organization and co-operation, while, as such, it is neither possible nor desirable to destroy them. They are the improved machines of method, rendering possible the production and distribution of goods with the least expenditure of time and energy. Their danger and injustice lies not in this direction, but in the fact that the resultant blessings go only to the few, while many are cursed by inevitably displaced labor, as industrial organization hastens on. As well talk of destroying locomotives and ocean greyhounds, however, because they have displaced thousands of lumbering coaches and slow-sailing vessels. Rather let these trusts, these great modern, labor-saving, time-saving, product-increasing machines, be owned and operated by society for the good of all, where now they are operated by private individuals for the few who own and control at the expense of the many.

In the building and maintenance of a road by society, the use of that road is forever guaranteed to the weakest individual without regard to compensation, while the cost is exacted from those who are able to give. In the same manner, when society shall maintain, own, and control all the means of production and distribution; when the principle of the road, the public school, the public park, shall be extended to all industrial activities, society will bestow upon every last individual every blessing made possible by the advance of science and the development of organized effort. In return for these great and ever-increasing blessings, society will exact, from every able bodied adult, that proportionate share of labor, mental or physical, necessary to maintain society in a condition to so bless.

When this shall come to pass, as come it must and will, then, and not till then, shall come to pass that form of government described in the immortal words of the immortal Lincoln, "that government of the people, by the people, for the people," and that "shall not perish from the earth."

Such is the end for which every intelligent individual should strive, whether he be a Socialist governor, a business man, or a laborer at the bench. Winfield P. Porter.

At a banquet at Paris given in honor of the Venezuelan commission, July 4, M. Millerand, the Socialist member of the cabinet, is reported to have spoken with great power and eloquence on the relations between France and the United States. It becomes clearer every day that the real upholders of the French republic at this time are the Socialists.

What can a Socialist do for Socialism? He can lend a hand and a little time every week to increase THE HERALD'S circulation. If every Socialist who is now reading the paper would send in one subscriber a week during July he would be surprised at the results. And now is the time to do it, preparatory to 1900. Start on the Fourth of July to do something for Socialism—while the other fellows read the discarded Declaration of Independence.

THEY CRY PEACE! PEACE! BUT THERE IS NO PEACE

MORE BATTALIONS THE ANSWER

Bellamy's Comparison of the Wars of Conquest and the More Brutal and Continuous War of Capitalism Upon Society.

Two miles from The Hague, in the center of a secluded and pastoral wood, stands a quaint old chateau called the "Huis ten Bosch" (the House in the Woods), in which on the 18th of May last the Peace Convention, which is still in session, assembled. This peace convention was called upon the invitation of the Czar Nicholas II., and meanwhile that ruler over millions of serfs is suppressing the legislative autonomy of the Grand Duchy of Finland because the Finns refused a demand made upon them for an increase in the ratio of conscriptions. "Peace!" cries the Czar, and the answer to his cry for peace comes from the dungeons of the Petropaulsky Prison and from the frozen wilds of Siberia in the groans and curses of the vanquished in that terrible social war which rages continually in Russia.

Sir Julian Pauncefote, the British delegate, pleads softly in this convention for peace, but when a proposition is made to prohibit privateering in time of war—should war ever break out again—he bitterly opposes it. Strange that at a "peace" conference a delegate should defend the right of the greatest power on the high seas to plunder the merchant vessels of any other people she may be at war with.

"Peace!" pleads the soft-spoken diplomatist and meanwhile the government he represents is hurrying troops to South Africa and battleships to Delagoa Bay in order to crush an independent and pastoral people of South Central Africa—the Boers—who are too honest and primitive to tolerate the intrigues and commercial roguery of a set of English and American capitalists called Uitlanders.

Seth Low, the erstwhile leader of the Citizens' Union party and president of Columbia College, represents the United States in the "peace" conference at a time when the American government is about to increase its standing army to 100,000 men. "Peace! Peace!" pleads the American delegate. Increase the army to 100,000 and annihilate the Filipinos! Yell the chauvinists and imperialists. Fill the Filipino archipelago with our battalions. Let them burn, butcher and destroy until there shall be naught but deserted plantations, smoking ruins, and trenches filled with rotting corpses, and then, when the only inhabitants left shall be the bloody-beaked vultures will peace prevail,—the peace that Tacitus referred to when, writing of the stern methods of warfare followed by the Romans, he said: "Faciant solitudinem appellatur pacem" ("They make a solitude and call it peace").

But it may be that the Peace Convention is at least in earnest about the desire to promote peaceful relations among the mightier and more capitalistic countries of the world. The United States may with impunity go to war with Spain—a third-rate power—or invade the Philippine archipelago. England may do likewise in the Transvaal. China may be divided up among the great powers of Europe, and third-rate powers like Turkey and Greece may make war upon each other; but probably the time has passed away when great capitalist countries can fight, and it may be that the object of the convention is to attempt some provision to prevent such an occurrence. In past ages war was "the sport of kings," and its victims their subjects; today war is the dread of capitalists, for it would result, if carried on between two great powers, in the destruction of commercial investments and enterprises. The internationality of capitalist interests was exemplified in December, 1895, when President Cleveland's bellicose message concerning Venezuelan affairs agitated the English Stock Exchange slightly, but caused a tremendous panic on Wall street. Even Germany, which until the formation of the empire in 1871, retained many of the features of feudalism, has since then developed so rapidly in the direction of capitalism that her commerce in the world markets competes very successfully in some instances with that of England and the United States. True, there is the War Lord to be reckoned with, but he represents the middle ages and feudalism, while the capitalists represent the present and fraud. The power of the capitalists of today extends alike over labor and the "Lord's anointed," kings and proletarians must bow before the mighty money lords, and when they cry "No war!" then war will cease. Probably, therefore, the peace conference may

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